

THE
C A S E

Ravenhill (1771) Of the COMPANY of

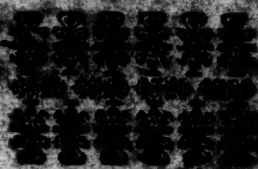
G R O C E R S
S T A T E D.

And their Condition in their Present Circumstances
Truly Represented.

Together with a short Account of their ORIGINAL;
How Eminent they have been in this
CITY, And also of some of their Antient
PRIVILEGES and USAGES.

Designed for INFORMATION and SATISFACTION of the MEMBERS,
And VINDICATION of the

C O M P A N Y.



L O N D O N.

Printed for the Company of Grocers, An. Dom. 1771.

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THE

COMPANY

OF THE

ROYAL

NAVY

OFFICE
GENERAL
PRIVILEGES

MEMBERS
OF THE



NAVY

LONDON

Printed by the Company of G. and A. D. 1707

T O

The Right HONOURABLE, Right WOR-
SHIPFUL, and the rest of the Worthy MEM-
BERS of the SOCIETY of the MISTERY of
GROCERY, LONDON.

William Ravenhill their Clerk, humbly offers and prays their Ac-
ceptance and perusal of these following Papers;

As a Testimony of his Hearty Desires, and Sincere Endeavours
to Vindicate the Reputation, and improve the Interest of this
Society.

AS soon as by the good Providence of God I obtained the favour, and had
the Happiness to be Chosen your Clerk, I resolved with my utmost Dili-
gence, to pursue and perform my Duty in this place, and thereby grate-
fully answer the expectation of my Friends, who promoted my Election;
and also lay hold of so fair an opportunity to ingratiate my self into the Favour and
Esteem of Good Men: Being Convinced, that if I should neglect my Duty, it
would render my Follies and Ingratitude more conspicuous to the World. There-
fore that I might in doing the one avoid the other, I endeavoured in the first place
to inform myself of the true State and Condition of the Company; upon Inquest
whereof, I found it plain and manifest, That for want of Knowledge of the Truth
ther of, not only many Worthy Benefactors with-held their Assistance towards dis-
charge of their Debts and Charities, But also many Reproaches and Reflections
were cast upon this Society; Both from Strangers (with whom they have been no
way concerned) And also their Creditors who rendred them obnoxious in Courts
of Law and Equity, And before the Commissioners for Charitable Uses; As if they
had been a Company that possessed a great Revenue, sufficient to pay all their Debts,
Yet were so averse from doing that, that they wasted and Consumed their Estate in
Feasting themselves, refusing to pay, unless they were Compell'd by Chargeable Suits;
which not only aggravated their Creditors, but alienated the Affections of many good
Persons, As well Members as others; and caused many Chargeable Suits and
Vexatious Prosecutions against them, Notwithstanding the Care and Endeavours
of some Worthy and Good Members, who used all possible means to avoid the same.
For I cannot deny, but that so long as I was ignorant of the Truth of their Case
(though I was an unworthy Member) Yet I was perswaded to believe many things
reported of the Grocers, which I now find to be far otherwise. Therefore I made
it my great design to acquaint my self with all their Affairs, and past transac-
tions, that I might be able to make a true representation of the Companies Condition
as to all Substantial matters, Both what it was before they Contracted their Debts,
and

and how they became indebted, what they have already done towards it, and what means and methods they may best use, and prosecute to discharge themselves, to the end those great Reproaches and Prejudices (which through mis-apprehensions and false Reports have been cast on this Company) may be removed. And every true hearted Member that bears a Christian respect to the Pious Memory of our Ancestors (who were Worthy Benefactors) and would in discharge of his Duty commend himself, after their Example, to Posterity, may willingly and chearfully lay to his helping hand. And as a further Testimony of my hearty desires to serve the Members, having so briefly stated the Companies Case, I shall endeavour to give you a short Account of the Antiquity and first Creation and Continuance of the Grocers, as far and clear as I can make Conjecture or have received any probable Account. As to that part of my Duty which relates to the Regulating and Digesting the Companies Books into an orderly Method, as also their Evidences to clear their Titles to their several Rents, Lands and Houses, and the several Schools under their Government; And also the several Ecclesiastical Livings in the disposition of this Society, with the names of their Founders, and how they became Vested in their Right; And also other Priviledges peculiar to this Society, I have already made such Progress and doubt not speedily to Compleat it, so as it may appear obvious and plain to be understood by every individual Member, Of which it will not be proper here to give an Account, But I refer to the Books and Records themselves, more fit to be inspected at this Hall by such as have right to know them, than to be exposed to view of others whom it no way Concerns.

The

1860

The COMPANIES CASE briefly stated.

Most part of the said Companies Revenues is charged with yearly Charities to several Parishes, Places, and Uses amounting to near the yearly profits they receive. Most part whereof consisted of Houses in *London*, which were all consumed by the late dreadful Fire, when they expected to have advanced great Sums of Money by way of Fine, on Renewing of Leases towards payment of their Debts.

They had also heretofore many and great Sums of Money paid into their hands as a Fund for the Uses following, (*viz.*)

To pay yearly Sums in Coals, Faggots, and Money to several Parishes and Wards about *London*, and elsewhere.

To several Prisons for Redemption and Release of Prisoners.

To the poor Members of the Company.

To be lent to Young Men that had served their Times to Members of this Company on Security, with little or no Interest, to set up, and to be returned again.

To buy Improvements for maintenance of Ministers where Livings are small, And

To maintain several Schools and Alms-Houses.

They complied punctually with all their Trusts, continuing in very great Credit and Reputation, until the sad effects of War and Fire rendered them incapable to discharge their yearly Charities where they have no fund left. And,

The remaining part of their great Debts which they Contracted, as followeth, *viz.*

Anno 1640. To Accommodate the late King in his Exigencies, on Security of some of his Peers. ————— 4500 *l.*

Anno 1642. To Subdue the Rebellion in *Ireland*, and Relieve the Protestants there. ————— 9000 *l.*

Anno 1643. To lend the City, for which, they had their Seal. ————— 4500

All which they took up on their Common Seal, nor were Singular therein, but necessitated thereto in compliance with all other Companies, and indeed with the whole City.

Upon their taking up this Money, they made a By-Law to levy the same on themselves, if their Stock fell short; and so they continued payment of their Interest. And as one Creditor called for his Money in, they took up of others, and paid them off; Depending upon getting in their said Principal. All which failed them, till at last their sole hope was of advancing Money by Renewing of Leases. Many whereof were now expired. But the Fire in 1666 Consumed their whole Revenue in *London*; They having already paid for Interest of Money between 1640, and 1666. — 30000 *l.*

As their Debts exceeded any other Companies, so their loss herein was exceeding great, so that now they were incapable any longer to pay Debts or Charities.

They applied themselves to the Parliament then sitting on their By-Law, But were rejected as binding to no more then were parties to it, most of whom were dead.

They had then no means to raise Money, but by letting their Ground to Builders for Fines on Long Leases; great part whereof they were compelled to, by decree of the Judges at *Cliffords-Inn*.

And by voluntary Subscriptions, both which were set on foot soon after the Fire: And to Encourage Subscriptions, Sir *John Cutler* Erected the first Building in the Garden.

They raised Considerable Sums, and propounded to pay their Creditors their principal part thereof down, and the rest at two payments.

And after many meetings most of their Creditors inclined to accept such proposal, finding how it must be advanced. But some of their Members being backward, and some Creditors ill advised, Sued the Company, and Seized their Hall in Ruines which put a stop to all; though those Creditors themselves repent this: Afterwards loosing their Charges, and glad to comply on lower terms than at first offered.

Afterwards the Company raise Money what they could of kind Members themselves, and take up the residue on their Assignment of the Sequestration and Conveyance of all their Estate to pay off the Creditors that Sequestred. And some other remaining proportions to Creditors who had not yet received any. And to supply what was wanting, they let their Land in *Ireland* on Fine, sinking the Rent to 10 *l. per Annum*. But the Hall continuing in Ruines, the Company was thereby rendered Reproachful.

The Apprentices bound at other Halls, and turned over.

The Freemen take their Freedoms of other Companies.

And all Benefactors decline as despairing of any good to Posterity.

The COMPANIES CASE briefly stated.

So that the Members every year dying and failing, and many removing into the Country, and none to succeed in their places.

It must needs follow that the Company in few years must dissolve for want of a Succession of Members:

Which would most reproachfully have rendered the Members then living, who were numerous and equal, if not more eminent than any other Company. Not only most ungrateful to their Predecessors who have been so liberal Benefactors, and have left such Grounds (though the Buildings were so consumed by the Fire) yet now built on, gives a great hope to posterity) but also obnoxious to posterity.

The Consideration whereof alone, moved the Right Honourable Sir John Moore, the present Lord Mayor, to repair the Hall, and also upon further Consideration, the rest of the Aldermen and other kind Members to enlarge it with Commodious Buildings for the Seat of a chief Magistrate. That it might not only encourage the Freemen, Apprentices and Benefactors to preserve the Company a Nursery of Charity, and Seminary of good Citizens. But also answer the Charge of the Building, in improving the yearly Revenue of the Company: And is indeed (if rightly considered) in the Companies present Circumstances, of greater advantage to the Company, than any one thing that hath been done for them. For,

I. It hath already encouraged the Apprentices and Freemen, so that whereas there used to be bound 1, 2, or 3 Apprentices in a Moneth, and 1, or 2 made free before, and those but poor Artificers; they are generally now increased to a far greater Number, As well of Free-men, as Apprentices, and many of them of good Quality.

II. It hath given great satisfaction to several Eminent Members, who have declared themselves very inclinable to Contribute largely towards discharge of the Companies Debts and Charities, if they see but any Encouragement from the rest of the Members.

III. This Building, though it amounts to much more then what it was at first designed, Yet a great part thereof hath been freely laid down on purpose for this work. And whatever is further laid down towards it, (which its hoped the whole will be raised by kind Members to answer these good ends) would never have been so given but for this very purpose.

So that in all probability, the Hall (if the Company please) may be every year disposed off for 200*l.* *per Annum* at the least (which being no way clogged (as the rest is, with Charities) Is more than two-fold, better than all the rest of the Companies Revenue they now receive besides.

And that the Building and Beautifying the Hall may not be a bait to Creditors again to seize it. So again to discourage the Members.

The Hall, and all the Companies Revenue is by advice of Counsel conveyed to Feoffees in trust.

I. Subject to secure the Money so taken up to discharge the Sequestrations, &c. And when those and what Moneys they should be so necessitated to take up to compleat the Buildings shall be discharged.

II. Then to secure the yearly Charities wherewith the Company is Chargeable. By many Benefactors who so heretofore left Moneys in their Hands, as a Fund to secure the same. No part whereof now remains, As being a trust they are liable in the first place, As a Duty incumbent on them both to avoid a Curse, and in order to obtain a Blessing from God upon their endeavours: As also to avoid prosecution of the Commissioners upon the Statute for Charitable Uses, who have yearly put the Company to vast expences already upon that Account.

And these things having been made known to the Creditors, The Company have been free from Suits and Prosecutions which they never before were since their troubles first began.

Which inclines their Creditors to comply upon any reasonable terms, and as some have already accepted, and are discharged: So many others are importunate to do the like: And now so fair an opportunity being offered to deliver the Company, and to give Encouragement to Benefactors. It is hoped there is no Member but will cheerfully embrace it, whereby they shall not only draw others on by their Example to preserve this Society, still a Nursery of Charity, and Seminary of good Citizens; But also encourage Benefactors for the future; some in their Lives, and others at their death liberally to extend their kindness towards this Company, And without all doubt, such works as these are acceptable to God in times of greatest trouble and danger.

*A short Account of the Original of the GROCERS, and
their first Incorporation; And their Condition in their
present Circumstances truly Represented.*

* Grocers (inquit Minshew) ab initio
ut ex legibus nostris probat, nihil minutim
sed omnia a grosso, by the great. Magnis
sc. ponderibus dividere soliti sunt. In libro
statutorum nostrorum significat Mercatores,
Qui aliquod mercium genus totum coemunt.
Skin. Etymologicon linguæ Anglicanæ.

THE word *Grocers* was a Term at first distin-
guishing Merchants of this Society in oppo-
sition to Inferiour Retailers, For that they
usually sold in gross Quantities by great Weights.
And in some of our old Books the Word signifies
Merchants that in their Merchandizing dealt for the

whole of any kind: But in after times the word *Grocery* became so extensive that it can
now hardly be refrained to the certain kinds of Merchandizes, they have formerly
dealt in. For they have been the most Universal Merchants that traded abroad, And
what they brought home many Artists of this Society found out ways afterwards to
Change and alter the Species by mixture, Confections, and Compositions of simple ingre-
dients; By which means many and various ways of dealing and trading passed under
the Denomination of *Groceries*. And indeed this City and Nation do in a great measure
owe the Improvement of Navigation to these Merchants, originally exercising this My-
stery, as trading into all foreign parts, From whence we have received either Spices,
Druggs, Fruits, Gums, or other rich Aromatick Commodities, It is well known this
Company hath bred the most Eminent Merchants in this City, and this Society hath
been so prolifick that many other Societies have been branched out from hence, as will
be owned by the most worthy of them; The Merchants Trading to the *Levant* Seas,
and other Societies have originally been the off-spring of this Society, as appears by
antient Records of Indentures of Apprentices to Members of this Company; And it is
not inconsistent, and may be within compass of Belief, That there was amongst the
Romans a Society agreeable to this of the *Grocers*, who were also Merchants trading in-
to those Seas, as may be Collected from *Persius* a Poet who wrote in *Rome* in the time
of *Augustus* describing the various Inclinations of men in their Course of Life, He in-
stances them in these words, (viz.)

*Mercibus hic Italix mutat sub sole recenti
Rugosum piper, & pallentis Grana Cymini: Sat. 5.*

*With Merchandizing this with Care doth run
Unto the East under the rising Sun
To fetch rough Pepper and pale Cammin Seeds
For Roman Wares, &c.*

Where Pepper, being the most Royal and preservative Spice, is only mentioned by
way of Eminency for all the rest; And so we may well conclude that this was the Rea-
son why the Society of the *Grocers* (whose Original first here exercised, may modestly
be supposed to spring from the *Romans*) were long before they were Incorporated, dis-
tinguished by the name of *Pepperers*, although they traded before in all other the former
Merchandizes, as well as that. It is impossible to give any other Account of the Original
of this Society, here in this City so long at first exercised under the Denomination of
Pepperers; For that, the City of *London* it self, at first under the *Britains*, and successively
after under the *Romans* and *Saxons*, and at last was over-run by the *Danes*. No History
now remains to give a certain Account of the first Methods of Government therein,
further than what may be Collected from some late Writers of our own now extant,
who have transmitted to us, what they could then discover by their Enquiry and Search
in Antiquity, whereby we may plainly understand that the first Model of Government
settled in this City, was from the Example of *Rome* it self, as Mr. *Stow* instances in the
very words of an ancient writer, who wrote in the Reign of King *Stephen*, (viz.) *This*
City (saith he, even as *Rome*) *is divided into Wards, it hath yearly Sheriffs instead of Con-*
suls, it hath the Dignity of Senators, it hath under Officers, and according to the Qualities of
Laws it hath several Courts and general Assemblies upon appointed dayes. And their Chief
Mini-

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Ministers of Law were stiled Portgraves (which is the same as Sheriff) long before they went under the name of Sheriff. Soon after the City obtained their Chief Magistrate to be under the Denomination of Mayor, which was about the first year of King *Richard* the first. And the first man we find advanced to that Dignity was *Henry Fitz-Alwin*, who continued therein 24 years successively; And afterwards for many years the Chief Magistrate was sometimes stiled *Custos*, and sometimes *Mayor*. And soon after (to wit) in the 17th. year of King *Henry* the third, it appears *Andrew Bokerell* a Pepperer was Chosen Mayor, and so eminent were the Pepperers in this Infancy of the Mayoralty that before the 36 year of that Kings Reign a Pepperer had the Chair 9 several years, and very frequently afterwards we find the Pepperers advanced to that Dignity. Which Society of the Pepperers encreasing and spreading so Universal in Merchandizing, that it appears they were distinguished as well by the name of *Grocers* (being a more comprehensive name) as Pepperers. Inasmuch that before they were incorporated by the Name of *Grocers* (to wit) in the 3d. year of King *Edward* the 3d. Anno 1329. *John Grantham* was Chosen and held Mayor by the Title of *Grocer*. And the first Charter I find of the Corporation of the *Grocers* was granted by King *Edward* the 3d. in the 20th year of his Reign, Anno Dom. 1345, which appears to be long before the *Mercers* were Incorporated, though they are now the only Company have precedency of the *Grocers*; Yet for the Reasons above-mentioned, it may be very well presumed, That as the *Grocers* were long before them the most Eminent Society, so in after times renewing their Charter by a more Comprehensive Term they might Post-pone themselves.

But though they thus march as a forlorn Regiment in the Front, (might the hopes and endeavours of many good Members prevail to have the Spirit of our Ancestors revived in the present Generation) This could no more Eclipse the *Grocers* who have all the Noble Army of the rest of the Corporations following them, than the Morning Star ushering in Day before it, can eclipse the Glory of the Rising Sun.

Afterwards the Charter of this Company was several times renewed, as also it was in the 7th year of King *Henry* the 6th. and they then made a Body Politique, by the name of *Custodes & Communitas Mysterij Grocerij Londini*; *The Wardens and Commonality of the Mystery of the Grocerij of London*. And in the beginning of that Kings Reign they purchased the ground where the *Grocers* Hall now stands, with the ground belonging to it, of *Walter Lord Fitz-water*, bounding the same between the *Old-Jury* and *VValbrook*. And so Considerable in the City were the *Grocers* long before that time, that they were the only men intrusted with the management of the King's Beam, peculiar to them, as principally using the same; and had the naming of the Weighmaster, and the naming, placing, removing and governing of the four Porters, all to be Elected out of their own Company, a privilege allowed them as their undoubted and inseparable right, as antient as that Office it self used in the City, and now at this day upon Settlement and Improvement thereof may become of much more advantage to the Members of this Company.

Also amongst other Privileges and antient Usages of this Company, I find Recorded even as high as *Edward* the 4th's daies, this Company had Power of inspection and Correction of Abuses and Irregularities of all Persons (though free of this or any other Company) in the City or Suburbs, any way using or exercising any kind of *Grocery*; and also to assay the Weights they bought or sold by: And to take notice of all their Defaults, and return them to be Fined at the Discretion of this Fellowship, and to take 4 d. of every person for their Labour therein, as well of such as were offending, as such as were not. Which Usage was alwaies continued, and in the Charter renewed to this Company in the 15th. year of the late King *Charles* the first; this Privilege is Confirmed and expressed to extend three miles from the City as well within Liberties as without, and hath only been omitted for some years past when the Company began to be first interrupted in their Affairs.

But to return to the purchase of the Hall in the time of King *Henry* the 6th. After which the Company flourished with many Eminent and *Worthy* Members, who became very liberal Benefactors, and had so great a share all along in the Senators of this famous City, that they never wanted an Alderman of their Members yearly to succeed Master Warden of this Company; and so faithfully did they acquit themselves of those Charities they were intrusted withal, that it gave them the greatest Reputation of any Company in *London*; Inasmuch that many well disposed Persons did Covet to make this Corporation as it were the *Corban* of their

A short Account of the Company of Grocers. 3

their Charities, which in process of time became their Snare, as in this Discourse will immediately appear, wherein I shall endeavour by giving a true Account of the Nature of those Charities, to remove the reproach that hath been cast on this Company as if they had mis-employed them; And make it plainly appear that the Company of *Grocers* have in the Judgment of every impartial man (who shall well weigh their Circumstances from the first to the last) acquitted themselves in all the Trust and Affairs of this Company as becomes Worthy Citizens, and beyond what the worst of their Detractors might have justly expected from them. Especially considering how small a part of their yearly Revenue Remains to the Company, when the Yearly Payments Issuing thereout, pursuant to the Disposition of the Donors are deducted.

FOR most part of all the Land and Houses given to the *Grocers* Company were by the Donors charged with yearly Charities issuing thereout to certain uses, well nigh amounting to as much as the rent reserved upon long Leases in being, before they Contracted any of their Debts, as is hereafter mentioned; All or most part of which lay in the City of *London*, and the same Leases many of them were nigh expiring about the time of the late dreadful Fire.

Those other Charities which were Summs of Money, given by several Benefactors into this Company (there to remain as a fund) were charged with yearly payments issuing thereout to certain Parishes, Places, and Uses by the Donors, well nigh as much as the full Interest thereof amounted to, or very small advantage to the Company over and above the same, so that the Company were necessitated to dispose of those Summs of Money at Interest on the best Securities they could get, to enable them to make good those yearly Charities. Many of which Securities might in all probability become very backwards in payment, and sometimes quite Desperate, so that the Company having daily Money pressed upon them, were forced to accept the same at Interest, and thereout continued Constant payment of those yearly Summs. And also to accommodate Young Men of their Members with Money on Security, to set up pursuant to the Wills, of several Donors of that kind (whereof they had not a few Benefactors) so that in time by occasion of many Losses and Casualties of this Nature, it cannot be imagined but the Company must sustain much damage, notwithstanding all their Care and Endeavours, though they were not in the least sensible thereof till they had long after under pressure tried their Securities, Their Credit being very high and in great Reputation.

But their Great Debts they Contracted as followeth, Viz.

ABout the year 1640 his late Majesty, King *Charles* the first, having Occasion for Money in his Exigencies, and making his Condition and Desires known to this Company, as well as others, they did take up Money upon their Common Seal, and to supply him did on Security of some of his Peers, accommodate his said Majesty with 4500 *l.* which (the unhappy War Succeeding) is yet unpaid.

Afterwards about the year 1642, this Company in Compliance with other Corporations, and indeed with the whole City, were again required to raise 9000 *l.* for the defence of the Kingdom of *Ireland*, and releif of the Protestants there, which they likewise took up upon Security of their Common Seal which was never repaid.

And afterwards in the year 1643, in Compliance with other Companies, they were induced to lend the City of *London*, 4500 *l.* which they in like manner advanced, and had the Common Seal of the City for Security thereof, some small part whereof they afterwards received, the residue is yet unpaid.

These great Loans were the only Means that brought this Company at last into such extremity; Yet did they appear to be so just in their intentions amongst themselves, that having so taken these great Summs of Money upon their Common Seal of several Persons at Interest, they made a By-Law in their Court of Assistants to levy the same by Assessement upon themselves and their Members in case their Stock and Estate fell short to pay it.

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And afterwards from year to year as their Creditors call'd for their Principal, (constantly paying the Interest as it became due) they took up other Moneys (which was daily offered to the Company) and paid them off.

About the year 1661, The Company having sustained many losses, and their Debts naturally every year encreasing (they receiving no Interest of any to whom they themselves had so lent, and despairing of the Principal, and upon Audit of the Wardens Accounts, finding such Prodigious Sums every year swallowed up in discharge of Interest) several of the Members taking the Companies Condition into Consideration, moved the Court of Assistants, and a Committee was appointed to inspect the same, And to consider of some way how to obviate the further encrease of the Companies Debts, by discharging them Gradually. But (other matters intervening) no progress was made therein till afterwards, about the Moneth of *August* 1663, upon the like occasion they were reminded thereof, and the Committee revived, and the further Consideration resumed; but having spent some time in considering which way to advance Money, The fair Prospect they had of advancing Money within a few years by renewing Leases of their Estates in *London* to discharge the greatest part of their Debts: And having Moneys daily pressed on them to supply their occasions on Security of their Common Seal, they were not hasty to propose the renewing of their Leases, Many of them judging it for the Companies advantage to defer that for some time longer, And to endeavour to get in their own Debts. In which Circumstances they continued, till soon after, before they had renewed any Leases, It pleased God the late dreadful Fire happened, whereby not only their Hall, but their whole Revenue in *London* (so highly improveable upon expiring Leases) was consumed; And the several Members then at the Helm, who most of them greatly suffered in their own private Capacities, were separated, and so taken up with Care of disposing of themselves and Families, that very few could attend the Affairs of the Company. And so that dreadful Calamity rendred this Company (which sustained so great damage therein) utterly incapable to comply with payment of their Debts and Charities, which plainly appears by the Wardens Books to have been all along before that time punctually paid and discharged as they grew due and were from time to time call'd for and demanded.

But as soon after the Fire as the Members could have freedom from their own distracting Affairs, they took the Companies deplorable Condition into their consideration, And found they had no refuge now left but to propound their ground to Builders for long Leases, and advance what Monies they could by way of Fines. And (that they might leave nothing unattempted) their Stock and Estate by these providences falling short to pay those great Debts so contracted) they applied themselves (on their said By-Law) to the Parliament then sitting, stating their Case how great Debts they owed, and how they became so indebted, to advance those great sums which they could never hope to receive, and that although they had receiv'd no Interest, yet they had before that time paid for Interest of the moneys (they had so taken up) nigh 30000 *l*. And therefore pray'd an Act of Parliament to put their said By-Law in Execution by Assessement on their Members. But that was rejected as Impracticable, that it should bind any more than those who were Parties to the making of it, who were then most of them dead. Whereupon as the only means they had then left, they endeavoured to raise money by letting their Ground; and what should fall short therein, they propounded to make up among themselves by a Voluntary Subscription of their Members; for whose Encouragement Sir *John Cutler*, at his own proper Charges, Erected the stately Fabrick out of its Ashes which is now their Parlour, and Entertaining Room over it in the Garden, hoping thereby to incite other Members to follow; shewing himself Zealous beyond all expression to raise and restore this Company out of its Ruines and Calamity.

To whose Memory the Company (as soon as they had afterwards Re-built and Enlarged their Hall) in pursuance of several Orders of the Court of Assistants, caused his Lively Statue in Effigy in white Marble to be erected on the right hand at the Upper end of the Parlour. And that the same may survive the Casual Accidents of Fire, and Canker of Envy (as the Poet in a higher strain intimated,) *Marmora Maonii Vincunt Monumenta libelli*. The Memory of *Cesar* in his Book should survive his Marble statue in the Senate-house. So my Desire is hereby to Record so Worthy a Benefactor, to the End his Name may be fresh and flourishing amongst the Generations to come, who shall in after Ages succeed happy Members of this Society.

And

And in order to Carry on so good a Work, a general Summons was ordered of the Members, and a Committee appointed, and several meetings had amongst themselves to obtain Subscriptions (wherein a good progress was made) and their ground propounded to Builders for what Fines they could get under the old rents, (which they could not much lessen in regard of their Charities issuing thereout, wherewith their Donors charged them) in order to advance Money; which accordingly was done, and several Meetings had with their Creditors. To whom they Propounded to pay their Principal Money, part down, and the residue by two Payments, at 5 and 10 years, to be secured by their Common Seal. Most of their Creditors complying with this fair proposal, considering that the money so to be raised, must be advanced even great part of it by a free Contribution, and Voluntary Gift of the Members, who many of them Liberally contributed; And great Summes were raised and paid. But whilst some of the Members were pursuing this good Design, and the Company in a hopeful way of wholly discharging themselves, the unkindness of some and backwardness of other Members, who should have followed so good Examples, gave such interruption as occasioned some of their Creditors (instigated by inconsiderate and self-seeking Agents) unadvisedly to sue the Company, and the very Ruines of their Hall to be sequestered and seized, Although those Creditors, afterwards repented themselves thereof, as sensible they had not only put themselves to great Charge (which they could never be re-imburfed) but had thereby injured the rest of the Creditors in discouraging so good a design, and obstructing the gifts of many Worthy Members, of whom several afterwards died, before their help could be again seasonably sought for; which wholly Eclipsed the Reputation of the Company, rendering them for the present incapable of further paying; till some time after several Worthy Members Continuing their endeavours (to carry on so good a Work begun) procured Money to be raised to pay off part, and more to be lent to discharge the rest of the Sequestrations, by persons, to whom their Creditors assigned the same by direction of the Company; And by letting their Lands in *Ireland* linking the Rent to *10 l. per annum*, and thereby, as also by Casual Profits, Benevolences and Gifts of their Members, paid of a good part of their Debts, And to supply what they could not otherwise for the present advance they took up Money upon Security of the Equity of Redemption of their whole Estate. Whereby, It plainly appears they used all wayes and meanes they were Capable of to raise Money, reserving nothing but the growing hope of their ground rent, which they are in Justice bound to preserve as a Seed for their Posterity, they having already paid, of their own Benevolence, and what they have so borrowed on Security of the remaining part of their Estate (which they have taken up for 7 years at *4 l. per Cent.*) far above the real value (to be sold) of what they receive thereout, over and above the yearly Charities, wherewith the same are Charged by the Donors: However (clouded with these Circumstances) the work went but slowly on; the Generality of the Members that should now have contributed their Assistance to discharge the whole being unsatisfied, as looking on the Gifts of some particular Persons, to signify little towards so great a work, unless some better encouragement might be given to procure a subscription of the whole Body of the Members; being of opinion, That so long as the Hall lay thus Ruinous, it wholly discouraged all. And under these sad Circumstances the Company continued, until it pleased God to move Sir *John Moore*, a Worthy Member of this Society, who taking into his consideration its deplorable Condition every year lessening in Reputation by reason of the Hall thus in Ruines, which not only discouraged men to take their Freedoms, and Apprentices to be bound there; And Benefactors both in their life-time and by their Wills from their Liberality; But also rendered the Society almost Contemptible: Out of his kindness and good Will towards this his own Company, was very inclineable at his own Charge to repair the Great Hall; hoping thereby to Encourage other Members by his Example to Contribute their Assistance either in re-Edifying or Augmenting the residue of their antient Seat. As the only means left to promote an Universal compliance of all the other Members, according to their several Degrees, and Abilities in liberal Contributions towards discharge of the great Arrears of their Debts and Charities, which being made known to a Court of Assistants, Sir *James Edwards*, Master of the Company then present, was pleased in the name of the whole Court to declare unto Sir *John Moore*, then also present, That the first mention of such his good intention towards them, had so grateful a Resentment, that it had a kind influence upon all present; And therefore made it the Request of the Court to him, on behalf of the Company, to pursue the same; Acquainting him, That he doubted not but it should be

be followed with so happy success, that the *Grocers Hall*, which may justly Claim precedence of all Halls and publick Places within this City of *London*, for Situation, and many other Conveniencies might in a short time be made the most Commodious Habitation for a Lord Mayor. Whereupon Sir *John Moore* was pleased to declare, he would give five hundred pounds to repaire and beautifie the great Hall, That he might thereby incite other Members to follow in so good a Work; Provided, Care might be taken so to settle the same, That what should be thus laid down might be so secured as to answer the good ends thereby design'd. Upon which so Worthy a Declaration, Mr. *Beale* and Mr. *Bourne*, two of the Wardens then present, by Agreement of the whole Court, undertook and promised forthwith to set about the work; And with all faithfulness to take Care the same should be laid out to the best advantage accordingly, so as to have it finished that Summer. And in order to Carry on so good a work (encouraged therein by several other Worthy Members then present) It was referred to the Wardens, together with some other Members, calling to their Assistance such Workmen and others as they should think fit, to Consider off, and propound a Model of such additional Building, in such place as might make the Hall every way Commodious for Habitation of the Chief Magistrate of this City, both for Ornament and Use; And also by advice of Council, to settle the Hall and all the rest of the Companies Revenue, (subject to the said former securities) so as it might answer these good ends, and secure (to the extent of it) the many yearly Charities payable by the Company, where there is no fund now left. Upon Report of which Committee, soon after Sir *John Frederick*, Sir *James Edwards*, Sir *Henry Tulse*, and several other Aldermen and Worthy Members agreed to Contribute liberally towards the same Additional Building; For which a Preamble was ordered, and accordingly drawn and engrossed whereby those that were subscribers, declaring how sensible they were that if the Hall should long Continue under these Circumstances, Not only all that had been done would be wholly fruitless, but all that Remain, (for which they were Trustees to the Generations to come) would soon waste into nothing, which would reproachfully render the present Members most ungrateful to their Ancestors, whose Names still Blossom in what remains of those Pious Monuments of their Charities, and obnoxious to those who should succeed happy Members of this Society.

And therefore concluded the reparation of the Hall to be the only leading means left to preserve the Society. And that, as Sir *John Cutler* had so long since for those very ends, at his own Charges erected that stately Fabrick which is the Parlour and Entertaining Room over it in the Garden; And Sir *John Moore* had now undertaken to repair and Beautify the great Hall: So they held themselves highly obliged to promote and carry on so excellent a work. And having caused the Scite and Fabrick of the Hall to be surveyed, and finding, that with some more additional Building (then already propounded to be erected,) it might be made a more commodious and convenient Habitation for the Chief Magistrate of this City, than any other within the City of *London*. Therefore encouraged by so good Examples, that it might answer all the good ends propounded, and might with all possible speed be carried on and finished, in order to invite and encourage a general Subscription of all the Members towards payment of the Companies Debts and Charities, they Liberally Subscribed and promised to pay towards the raising and finishing of such additional Building, the several Sums of Money there under, at their several names set down, and appearing, and declaring themselves (if occasion should be afterwards) to be further liberally assisting to Compleat so good a work; Not doubting but their Brethren, the rest of the Members, would every one follow according to their Degrees and Qualities. And that the Beautifying and repairing their Hall might not prove a Bait to such Creditors (if any should be) as formerly seized the Ruines of the same to endeavour again a Sequestration against it; But might answer those good ends so by them designed, the Company for Encouragment of their Members in their Liberal Subscriptions towards this great Work by advice of learned Council Conveyed the same, and all their Revenue, and the Equity of Redemption thereof (subject to the said former Securities) to Trustees to secure (as far as the same will extend) the yearly payment of those Charities for which they are Chargeable to several Parishes, Prisons, and Uses by their Benefactors, who heretofore paid into their hands several great Sums of Money for those Uses (for which now no fund remains) that they might also thereby not only discharge their Consciences towards God, and the Memory of such Pious Benefactors, But also avoid the Chargeable Prosecutions of the Commissioners upon the Statute for Charitable Uses who have of late put this Company every year to exceeding great Charges and Expences.

Thus

A short Account of the Company of Grocers.

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Thus have I endeavoured, to lay down the true State of the Company of Grocers, as it relates to themselves, and their Creditors in their present Condition. The Substance whereof, having been lately declared before my Lord Chancellor, by way of Answer to a Creditors Bill (who is the only Person that now prosecutes any suit against them) seemed to give great satisfaction unto many Council, and other Persons unconcerned, who before, were ignorant of the true State of the Companies Condition. And may (happily) be a means to divert others, from prosecuting any such Chargeable suit against the Company, in the event whereof, they cannot promise themselves so much benefit, as they may now hope to receive without it. And since that, the Bishop of London, and the rest of the Commissioners for Charitable Uses, having been likewise informed of the Companies Condition, and what they had so designed, and were in Prosecution of to preserve their Reputation (beyond what they could either by Law, or Equity, be compelled to) were so well satisfied therein, that they advised the Prosecutors for the Charities, rather to apply themselves to the Wardens, in a kind, and friendly Manner, and encourage the Members to go on in so good a work, than in vain (wasting the Parish Stock) again to disturb them with Suites, to discourage the Members; and thereby, not only to hazard the loss of their own, but to wrong all others concerned with them. And also several of their Creditors, who before were instigated by some unadvised Persons, to give the Company disturbance, as soon as they were informed of their Case, better considered their own Interest, and wholly forbore; which not only afforded great Freedom, and Liberty to the Members in the Court of Assistants, to follow this undertaking, but also gave Wonderful Encouragement to the late Master, and Wardens, to begin; And to Sir Henry Tulse, Mr. Box, Mr. Winch and Mr. Reeve, the succeeding Master, and Wardens, for this present year, (to whom Mr. Beal, and Mr. Bourn, (two of the late Wardens) at the request of the Court of Assistants, willingly joyned themselves to facilitate the work) to go on, who have (all as one man) been very Zealous, and Active, in this great work, of finishing the Hall in so short a time, as is almost incredible; Especially considering, that the same was many wayes (upon further Consideration had) enlarged, and made more Convenient, than at first was intended, with many Accommodations (not at first thought of) to render it so exactly (as indeed it is) far excelling any Hall that now is, or (probably) ever was in London, so that the whole Charge of compleating the same (I believe with as good husbandry as was possibly to be managed) yet swells to double the Sum, which was at first propounded to be disbursed, and therefore call'd for further Assistance, of more Members, than at first was designed, to Contribute to the same.

And now the Hall being Compleatly finished, as the only means propounded for Encouragement of all the Members, A Court of Assistants was call'd, in order to consult, and advise of the most speedy, and effectual way, and method, to promote, and gain their Subscriptions. And being met, the Court very seriously took into their Consideration, the State of the Company, under their Circumstances and their present Necessities for Money, to carry on this great Work, of paying the Debts, and raising and restoring, the declining Reputation of the Company, designed by the new Building and Repairing the Hall, which, though the Charge amounts to a far greater Sum, than was at first propounded, to make it more Commodious, yet it manifestly appeared to have been the only means left; and, that without it, all others, would have been ineffectual, to keep the Company of Grocers upon a Foundation, which, otherwife, must in a short time have naturally dissolved of it self. For that the Apprentices, and Freemen, of any Estate, or Value, who before wholly declined, have now daily encreased, as having a prospect, by what is visible, of a prosperous carrying on the whole work, answerable thereto; And that, though this Charge of the Building, amounted to a great Sum, yet when they considered that the Company may probably receive yearly (if they please) as much as the interest of the Moneys therein disbursed amounts to; And that so great a part thereof, as was already paid would not have been given, upon any other Account; And that the work now compleated, is in it self of far greater value than all the other part of the Companies Revenue (over and above the Charities issuing thereout) And that those several Sums, so subscribed, were thus freely given by several Worthy Members, on purpose for this great Work, that it might encourage the whole Members, freely, and liberally, to Contribute towards the residue of this Work, and the Debts. And that it is hoped, the whole harge will be so advanc'd, by kind Members, incited by the same motives; They unanimously resolved, not only liberally to follow themselves, but from those great Examples, to recommend the carrying on the whole work, to a select Committee, consisting of such Members in every of the four Divisions, then already made, whose opportunity, and inclinations, they had great hopes, would engage them to improve their interest with
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their Brethren by the best Arguments they could use to stir them up to a liberal Contribution towards so acceptable a Work. The Court appointing the Wardens for the time being, and all such kind Members as would be assisting herein, or any two, or more of them (on whom the Clerk is from time to time ordered to attend with the Papers appointed for the Subscription in every division) to be a Committee for this work, who are by the Court, on behalf of the Company, desired upon all occasions, and with what speed they could, or might possible, to shew themselves good examples. And from thence press and stir up all other their Brethren to Contribute towards discharging of the remainder of the said Building, and the Companies Debts, That so great and good a Work, wherein so many thousands are and may be concerned, might be chearfully carried on; and so might all (as Fellow-helpers) have the honour to be Recorded amongst the Generations to come, The happy Repairers and Restorers of the Company of *Grocers*.

Thus far, by the good Providence of God provision is made, and encouragement given to all kind Members to joyn in Carrying on this great Work. And as those at the Helm have endeavoured every way to promote the advantage of the Company, so their desires are to lessen the Burthen of their Brethren. In order whereto, they have restrained the renewing of any Lease of the Companies Estate; And by Order upon Order, barred access to treat touching the same, whilst there is 21 years in being. And also have sunk the Charge of coming upon the Cloathing, and other Charge gradually ascending to that degree; That they may undergo their Duty in this Society, every way in their Turns, with more Ease and Chearfulness. And such endeavours are using for the good of this Company, as I doubt not but in time will give greater Satisfaction, and Encouragement to the Members, than possibly they might have expected.

And to avoid one great Evil frequently practized, by the Members of this Company, in Voluntarily, or designedly suffering their Apprentices to be bound at other Halls, to Members of other Companies, and so turned over to serve their times to them; (than which nothing can be more destructive to this Society) the Court of Assistants taking the same into their Consideration, have by advise of learned Council pursuant to their power given them by their Charter, and the Statute in that Case provided, made a By-law to restrain the same for the time to come enjoining every Member of this Society (so far as may fairly lye in their own power) to forbear it for the future. And though (through misapprehension, and for want of knowledge of the true state of the Companies Condition) they have already done it, Yet when they have so much encouragement, to joyn their Assistance in this good Work begun; And shall consider their Oathes both as Apprentices and Freemen (which is Motive enough to every Sincere, and just man, to pursue the same, unless such as seek curious Evasions to elude so sacred a Tye) It is not to be doubted, but they will not only observe this, and all other Lawful Ordinances made for the good of the Fellowship according to their Oathes: But will in and by all other wayes, and means, to (their Power) promote the Interest, and advantage of this Company, as good Citizens, and Brethren.

HAVING thus Stated the Condition of the Company, as it long flourished in Splendour, and gradually through Various Providences, and the sad effects of War, and Fire, how it groaned under so great pressure in her sadder Circumstances; And having set before you the happy Encouragement already now given, and the Methods propounded again to raise, and restore this Company to its former Splendor; I now turn to the Honourable, and Worthy Members, of whom it Consists; And you my Noble, and good Masters, under whom I hold my Station in this place, Bear, I humbly pray you, with my Zeal, and Freedom, and the boldness I assume, to move you, to set to your helping hands in this work, so excellent, and acceptable to God, and every Good Man:

I. By remembering you of those Eminent Charities, For which those Worthy Members, who went before you in former times, and are to this day Celebrated; And have left us such grounds (as being now built) gives us the prospect of a great Revenue when the Leases are out, which though far distant, are and will be every year (like useful Timber,) a more growing hope to Posterity.

II. That

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II. That you would not only think it enough to praise them, but be provoked by a generous Emulation, to follow their Example, liberally and bountifully to afford your Assistance, Not only to secure but also to encrease this growing hope, that our Burthen and reproach, being removed, Our Benefactors may be encouraged, and this Society still preserved a Seminary of good Merchants, and a Treasury of Charity; That so the succeeding Generations may bless and honour you, as much as you do those Worthy Members in former times, when your Names shall be Recorded as Raisers, and Restorers of the Company of *Grocers*.

III. That what you do you would do speedily, whereby you will draw on others, that need quickening and encouragement by your Example; And in so doing, you will not only have the Comfort of what you do your selves, but be the happy promoters in others, of what the Company will have Cause to bless God, and give you thanks for it.

IV. That you will Consider how great a Deliverance you had to escape the late Dreadful Fire with your Lives; And how Gracious God hath been to you, still to entrust you with his Talents lent for Improvement, as Stewards in his work. And that this Company which suffered so much in that Calamity, hath no other hands but yours, to repair her breaches.

V. That you can have no such true Comfort in the World as to be Conscious of doing of good Works of this Nature, when as faithful Stewards of that which is not Consigned to you into property, but into trust, you have (as good and faithful Servants,) but well disposed of a parcel of your great Lord's Estate, according to his own Will.

For though good works in themselves (as flowing back from the Fountain from whence they spring) can be no way meritorious, Yet they have been alwayes, so acceptable to God, that we find in every Age, Estates continue longest in the Name, and Family, of such as have been most diffusive, in Works of this Nature; That if it were modest, to render a reason, why so many great Estates, are sooner wasted by a loose Heir, than gotten by his frugal Parent, it may well be presumed, because so little of it was bestowed to such Uses: When men return so little to God, to whom they owe all they have. And most assuredly, no Article in your Accompt, at the great Audit, will sooner be allowed, to Cover many other Errors, then what is thus disposed; And now, as Spice is a great ingredient in this Mystery, and is a part of your Arms; so I pray consider, how Almes in Scripture are called, an Odor of a sweet smelling Savour. And it is these perfumes, that will prove acceptable to God, and have a good Savour amongst men. So I Conclude, with my Prayers to Almighty God, to encline all your hearts, according to your several Degrees and Qualities, in this great work, to acquit your selves, as good Citizens, and *Grocers*; And that I may be happy, in discharge of my Duty, which alone moved me to make this Address to you. And shall be my Endeavours to perform, As,

Right Honourable,

Right Worshipful,

And the rest of the Worthy Members,

*Your most faithful and most humble
Servant,*

Grocers-Hall,
March 12, 1682.

*W. Ravenhill, Clerk of
the Society of the Mystery
of the Grocers.*

